

# COMMON GROUND



MAY - JUNE, 1949

VOLUME III NUMBER 3

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To combat all forms of religious and racial intolerance. To promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews, and to foster co-operation in educational activities and in social and community service.

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## Cover Photograph : "In Conference"

President Truman, Dr. Everett R. Clinchy (President, National Conference of Christians and Jews) and Nelson A. Rockefeller (General Chairman, 1949 Brotherhood Week) plan Brotherhood Week.  
(Copyright—Harris & Ewing).

## Social Responsibility and Social Problems

*There is widespread interest to-day in Social Problems ; the religious bodies have always had a deep concern in the relationship between religion and everyday life. "Common Ground" asked ministers representing the Churches and the Synagogue to give a survey of what they have done and are doing in this sphere.*

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY and THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES

*This article is the result of an interview with Rev. C. H. Cleal.*

AT the Amsterdam Assembly last September, it was recognised that the widespread disorder in society is a challenge to the Church to find new creative ways of living, such as would bring about a responsible community. This is particularly the concern of the *Social Responsibility Department* of the British Council of Churches. This group has been engaged in study of the implications of the Christian faith for a Christian working in industry, and in January held a conference of employers, Trade Union leaders, industrial chaplains and other representatives.

## Arousing Social Responsibility.

At this conference the opening speaker emphasized the part which the laity must play in a Christian revival. "It seems to me," he said, "that we must develop an intensive system of corporate lay effort, by getting people who work in secular occupations to come together to discuss with one another the Christian problems that confront our society to-day."

Another department of the B.C.C. which studies the implications of the Christian faith in everyday life is the *Youth Department*. Amongst the subjects which claim its special attention are the effects of modern industry on young people, and the relation between Christian doctrines and the kinds of activity which are associated with factory life.

What about the life of the country worker ? There is a *Rural Questions Committee* which concerns itself with studying the underlying spiritual significance of the country-side, and the safeguarding from the Christian point of view of the special interests of country people.

Related to these committees and departments of the B.C.C. is the *Study Commission* of the World Council of Churches, concerned amongst other things with the nature of Christian action in secular society.

### **Response of the Churches.**

How do the departments of the British Council of Churches such as those mentioned above, make contact with local Church members ? The B.C.C. is linked up with 144 Associate Councils throughout the country ; they in turn have local committees. The Associate Councils remit to their committees consideration of any document sent to them by the B.C.C.

The British Council of Churches was only constituted in 1942. It is anticipated that many local interested groups will be formed to deal with these subjects and take local action. While results up to the present have been only moderately encouraging, another two years will be needed really to show how much co-operation can be obtained from the localities. One of the difficulties is to bring Christian people to see that Christianity has a concern with secular life, that Christians have a responsibility, as Christians, in the spheres in which they carry out their daily work. Dr. J. H. Oldham, in his speech at the close of the conference mentioned above, stressed the need for "long and specialised study." Before the Church can begin to preach with a new power, she must understand more of the problems, both those which are implicit within the sphere of secular life and work, and those which confront Christian people who have responsibilities towards the spheres in which they live and work. The Church, he said, must submit to the discipline of learning.

### **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY and The ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

EUGENE LANGDALE

THE attitude of English Roman Catholics to social responsibility has to some degree been conditioned by their exclusion from British public life until the Emancipation Act in 1829. In consequence they have been inclined to close in on themselves as a community, and even to-day are not always easy to rouse to non-Church interests.

Another factor which has had an important bearing on the matter is the comparative lack of Middle Class representation in the Roman

Catholic Church in England. After the Reformation, Catholicism survived mainly in the aristocracy and landed gentry, and amongst the yeoman farmers. At the end of the XVIII century, the large influx of Irish Catholic immigrants created great proletarian communities in the new industrial cities. In London, Catholicism centred around the Foreign Embassies (until 1778 English Catholics were not allowed to have their own chapels). During the XIX century when the English social conscience was being aroused by the Liberal Middle Class and the Non-Conformist Churches, there was no comparable Roman Catholic Middle Class strength. Gradually, a Middle Class has evolved out of the other classes and from the accession of converts, and the development of this—socially—very important and active cross-section of the population is a characteristic of present-day Catholic life.

These conditions have had two important results amongst others (and it should be stressed that we are speaking of conditions and results which apply in a special way to England and not necessarily to the Continent).

1. The clergy may not have shown a marked concern with universal or national rights, but they were, and still are, very much concerned with the rights of their people.

2. Those rights have revolved, for historical reasons, mainly around Housing, Temperance, the Poor Law and Education, but the subject of outstanding importance to all Roman Catholics is Education. Catholics are, to-day as ever, very much alive to the value of their schools. One of the great problems of the future will be the raising of the huge sums necessary to preserve, and add to, the denominational schools under present conditions. How the wider social responsibilities will be affected by these crushing educational commitments will be a question of no small import.

### **The Religious Orders.**

The Religious Orders are one of the most important expressions of the Social Responsibility of the Roman Catholic Church. Many young people who through the Church have experienced the arousal of social conscience, join a religious order that they may lead lives of service. The Orders do much of the work which, in non-Catholic circles, is done by private persons or private enterprise. They are responsible, for instance, for running and maintaining Approved Schools, Special Schools (for the mentally deficient, epileptics, etc.), Orphanages, Homes for the Aged, etc. With increased opportunities, however, many young Catholic layfolk are entering the public social services. This tendency is particularly marked in nursing.

During the XVIII century, and the first half of the XIX century, English Catholics, precluded as they were from taking part in the national life, stood outside the strong Continental stream of Catholic thought on Industrial Relations. As far as English Catholics are concerned, the dominating figure in this sphere in the latter part of the XIX century was Cardinal Manning. In 1909 the Catholic Social Guild was founded to arouse interest within the Catholic body in social questions. To-day, awakening social vision and increasing consciousness of responsibility are expressed by such organizations as the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, the Young Christian Workers ; and plans are being made for the formation of associations of Catholic Employers and Managers.

Church responsibility in Industrial Relations, however, is a vast subject of its own, and is best left for more detailed treatment on a future occasion.

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY and THE SYNAGOGUE I. LIVINGSTONE**

**S**Ocial responsibility, as expressed in loving service for others, is a basic principle of Jewish life. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This appears in the Bible where the lesson is clearly and repeatedly taught that every man's life is bound up with the lives of others, and that people must love and serve one another. In the earliest post-Biblical collection of the sayings of the Jewish rabbis and sages (*Ethics of the Fathers*), one of the sayings of Simeon the Just, who lived about 200 B.C., has been recorded : "On three things the world standeth : on the Law, on the service of God, and on the acts (or the bestowal) of loving kindnesses." These acts of loving kindnesses are interpreted as including those services to others which to-day are covered by "social service," although the Rabbis required that, to have real value, they must spring from "true pity."

### **Religion and Everyday Life**

In any consideration of what the Synagogue is doing to arouse, or to increase, social responsibility, we must bear two facts in mind. First, the Synagogue represents, even is identified with, the Jewish community in a closer way than is the case as regards the Church and the Christian communities. The Synagogue is both the expression, and the centre, of Jewish communal life. It is therefore difficult, even in mind, to differentiate between charitable work carried on by Jews as members of their synagogues, and Jews as members of their community. The Synagogue has always been far more than a place to which worshippers

come for religious services. Around it gather schools for religious instruction, classes for study of the Law and of Hebrew, groups formed for charitable and social purposes.

This brings us to the second point which should be noted. Judaism has always stressed the close concern of religion with everyday life ; she does not differentiate between the religious and the secular ; she has refused to divorce believing from doing. During the Middle Ages, Jewish communities all over Europe organised and maintained social services for the relief of their brethren in need ; such as the clothing of the poor, the education of orphans, visiting the sick, etc. In London, from the middle of the 18th century, a number of charitable institutions sprang up in connection with the Synagogue. Food charities were founded at the beginning of the 19th century ; synagogue funds were used for poor relief, for building almshouses, etc.

### **Community Service and National Service**

Within the last fifty years, state organisations for social service, representative of the nation as a whole and independent of any Church connection, have grown to a degree never known before. Jews are working in practically all branches of social service organised by, and for, the nation. The strong Jewish concern for social welfare and sense of social responsibility are being expressed to-day in practice in countless ways. In other words, Jews in their numbers will be found in both the services of the Jewish community, and those within the national framework.

*"Justice and its Claims" and "Mutual Responsibility in the Community" are two of the reports of the first International Conference of Christians and Jews, 1946. These and other reports are contained in the pamphlet "FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND RESPONSIBILITY," price 1s. 1d. post free from the Council of Christians and Jews, Kingsway Chambers, 162a Strand, London, W.C.2*

## The Meaning of Pentecost

S. M. LEHRMAN

*The Feast of Pentecost is celebrated on 3rd and 4th June. Common Ground asked a prominent Jewish scholar to write about the meaning of the festival.*

PENTECOST is perhaps the richest of the Jewish festivals in the variety of meanings. It was first associated entirely with agricultural life. In Exodus it is called the *feast of harvest*, because it was the concluding festival of the grain harvest which, in Palestine, lasted for seven weeks, beginning during the Passover with the harvesting of the barley, and ending at Pentecost with the harvesting of the wheat. The feast was a season of gladness, a joyful acknowledgment of the completion of the harvest in the land which God had given Israel. In Numbers it is called the *day of first fruits*. A third name is the *feast of weeks* because it occurs seven weeks, or fifty days, after the offering of the barley sheaf during the Passover feast. *Pentecost* is simply the Greek word for "fiftieth," and was the name used by the Greek-speaking Jews.

### The Giving of the Law

After the Exile, Pentecost became best known as "the season of the giving of our Law," and so it is to-day. Jewish tradition regards it as the anniversary of the revelation of the Law of Moses in Sinai. In the Talmud it is called *Atseret* which is translated as "solemn assembly," and is used to refer to the crowds at the pilgrimage festivals. The literal meaning of this Hebrew word is "restraint," or "restriction," and in this sense it is regarded as coming at the end of the festive season which began with Passover. It teaches that freedom unaccompanied by restraint resembles a ship without a rudder. Without the self-control breathed by Revelation, freedom might degenerate into license.

In order to express Israel's delight and joy in the Law, the day of the receiving of the Torah (Law) is referred to by the Rabbis as Israel's Wedding day, the Torah being the "marriage contract" which God gave His people, as the culmination of their betrothal to Him which commenced with Passover. A symbol of Israel's longing to be the recipients of the Torah is the custom known as the *Sephirah*, the counting at even-tide of each approaching day between Passover and Pentecost, a counting daily hailed with blessing. It will be seen that the original pastoral significance of this festival has been eclipsed by the historical (the Revelation of the Law); it was natural that this should happen after the destruction of the Temple. In the Liturgy, the historical significance is stressed and the account of the Revelation has taken pride of place over the former agricultural associations.



### SCROLL OF THE LAW.

*In the Scrolls of the Law used  
in Synagogues the text is always  
written by hand on parchment.*

*(Photo by courtesy of the Jewish Museum)*

### The Liturgy

Amongst the Scriptural portions read at this festival is Exodus XX which contains the account of the Revelation of the Law. To this is added the first chapter of Ezekiel, perhaps as a reminder that God reveals Himself not only to the nation, but also to the individual. The Book of Ruth is additional reading, being a story bound up with the grain harvest in Palestine.

A feature of the first day's service in some synagogues is the recitation of a mystical rhymed hymn in Aramaic, said to have been written by a Rabbi in Germany in the eleventh century. Mention should also be made of the Anglo-Jewish custom, on the Sabbath before the festival, of reciting a reminder of the ravages during the Crusades, when many Jews were

killed. In a number of Jewish communities of Germany, martyrologies of men who died for the sake of the Law used to be recited on the Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost.

The theme followed throughout these ceremonies tells of a joyful people, governed by a vigorous faith which advocates law combined with freedom, and reminds man that Judaism was given as a source of strength in the struggles of life.

## The Meaning of Whitsun

THE BISHOP OF STEPNEY

*Common Ground asked the Bishop of Stepney to write about the meaning of this festival which is held on June 5th.*

I HAVE been asked to answer briefly the question, What does the Whitsuntide festival mean to Christians?

Whitsuntide commemorates a historic event—crucial in the life of the Christian Church—which took place during the Feast of Pentecost, seven weeks after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Among the crowds of pilgrims assembled at Jerusalem was a group of Jesus' disciples. Their numbers were not great—about 120, so the record says—and that morning they were all gathered together in one house. There something happened to them which was profound and lasting in its spiritual effect.

We are told that there were startling manifestations of wind and fire (symbols of the Spirit of God). There was also a strange phenomenon of "speaking with tongues." Different views have been held about the exact nature of these occurrences. But they were the external accompaniments of something much deeper:—those present "were all filled with the Holy Spirit." In the experience of the early Christians this was an abiding fact. To them their religion meant not so much the acceptance of obligations and duties, as an experience of new life within. Undeniably there was power in the new religion. Their inner experience of this was borne out both by the attraction which it exercised and by the opposition which it aroused.

This life-power had a distinctive character. Amid wide differences of temperament, and (later) of race and colour and culture, there was a common Christian *ethos*, which was dynamic. Like Ezekiel, Christians were aware of a mysterious Something which lifted them on to a higher plane of life and remoulded their characters on the lines of the character of Jesus. He had spoken to them of the Holy Spirit which the Father would send them—or which He would send to them from the Father.

He had convinced them that God's goodness is shown supremely in Love—a love which is immensely wise and immensely strong. They had seen such love in Him, and now they found it beginning to take possession of themselves. They were aware of a new capacity for loving, which made them more intensely alive.

This experience of vital power continued. St. Paul regarded it as the indispensable hall-mark of real Christianity. "The Holy Spirit," "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Jesus"—it did not matter which of these phrases was used ; they all stood for the same vital reality. "The fellowship of the Holy Spirit" was the inner meaning of the life of the Christian community. Christians were convinced that the new power which had come into their very imperfect human lives was nothing less than the power of God—a power which they had seen in its fullness in the life of Jesus. It was God Himself, not standing aloof but entering into them. Humbled and awed, but with immense confidence, they set out to continue their Master's work.

Thus it is that Christians keep the Whitsun festival as the birthday of the Church. From the moment when Jesus first attracted a few disciples to Himself the Church had existed in embryo—a tiny body living a dependent life in the womb of its mother, Israel. But now the time came when the infant began its independent life, expanding its lungs and drawing into itself the Spirit (or Breath) of God. From the first beginning it grew and matured and, conscious (like Abraham) of a Divine call, went out into the world to fulfil its independent mission and destiny.

### **A Time of Thanksgiving**

Thus for Christians Whitsuntide is primarily a time of humble thanksgiving. We thank God that He is not only infinitely "above" the world, but actively alive in it ; that the power of His life, displayed fully in the life of Jesus, is at work (in spite of our imperfections and sins) both in the Church collectively and in individual Christians, so long as they submit themselves in loyal trust to Him ; and that the resources of that Divine power are endless.

At the same time the festival is a much-needed reminder that the mission of the Church is a Spiritual mission ; its true life is in the realm of the Spirit : its only real strength is spiritual strength ; all its organisation and resources, all its rites and ceremonies, all its laws and customs and traditions, have meaning and value only because—and only so far as—they are means of living in contact with God. Through that contact, the Spirit of God enters freely into human beings, making them strong to love and to serve.

## A Problem in Religious Education

J. A. LAUWERYS

*Difficulties in teaching the Crucifixion story.*

AT a recent conference, attention was focussed upon the problem, vitally important at this period of world history, of using the educational process deliberately for the improvement of relations between nations and between cultural groupings. One speaker, a teacher, pointed out that the stories told in the Gospels certainly did not foster friendship between Christians and Jews. Pursuing abstract logic rather than common sense, or perhaps wishing to use paradox to arouse discussion, he went on to propose banishing the New Testament from schools. He supported his plea by pointing out that it was illegal in several States of the U.S.A., to teach any part of the Bible.

Clearly, it is futile to ask schools to create in pupils attitudes which are not supported by the community at large or to prevent the growth of attitudes which are fostered or demanded by the home and by society. It is stupid, for example, to blame teachers for a rise in juvenile delinquency or for the fact that the young tend to show less consideration than they did for the old. What is at fault is not what teachers say or fail to say, but what parents and adults think and do. Nevertheless, the importance of what children learn at school must not be minimised. It may serve to crystallize what would otherwise remain vague and formless. If a double set of attitudes, say towards tolerance and towards intolerance, exists potentially in the social *milieu*, the school may select and strengthen one and make it prevail.

Now, to teach the story, say, of the Crucifixion to young Chinese is very unlikely to produce any trace of antisemitism. Chinese society has long been permeated by a spirit of almost complete religious and racial tolerance, there is no trace of antisemitism in the revered Classics, there is in the history of China no record of persecution. In Europe the situation is different. The prevailing attitude towards the Jewish people is ambivalent. They are both liked and disliked, admired and despised, tolerated and persecuted. Under good conditions, the human feelings prevail and the undesirable ones are pushed into the background, though they are seldom destroyed. Under bad conditions the baser feelings come to the top and are patterned into a general antisemitism.

We blind ourselves if we ignore the fact that, to some degree, anti-Jewish feelings are kept alive in Britain as well as elsewhere, through the manner in which children learn the Gospel stories. Many accept quite unknowingly and unthinkingly the idea that the divine Messiah, Saviour of All Mankind, was rejected by the Jews and put to death by them. Very

few, of course, would consider that this justified mild persecution of present-day Jews, still less Nazi horrors. But vague, obscure and muddled though it may be, at the back of the minds of many persists the idea that there is at work here some sort of Divine Justice rather than merely human injustice. Clearly, this is tragic. It is an offensive contradiction that the story of the sacrifice of One who loved all mankind should help in any way to keep alive hatred or dislike of any portion of mankind.

### **The School and the Crucifixion Story**

Some teachers feel tempted, faced by this situation, to explain away some features of the story. For example, they point out that crucifixion was a usual punishment in the Roman World two thousand years ago. A more radical approach is, however, necessary. A teacher charged with the heavy responsibility of giving religious instruction to the young must be vividly aware of the difficulty and of the dangers of the task he attempts. In particular, he must realise that he may arouse in his pupils a latent anti-Jewish feeling—a result he would be the first to deplore. In consequence, it would probably be well for him to draw the attention of the children, quite deliberately and explicitly, to features of the story which, though obvious, are sometimes quite surprisingly overlooked. For example, that Jesus Himself was a Jew and kept Jewish observances ; that all the Apostles and the early disciples were Jews ; that many people in Jerusalem did not accept Jesus as the Messiah—which is true also of many people in London or New York ; that those who accepted Him were probably not in the streets when the mobs gathered ; that the preference for Barabbas is no excuse or explanation of the persecution of Jews anywhere to-day—if sin there was it was committed by those who committed it and not by others, for we can only commit our own sins. Other facts, too, are relevant and important : that the Jews in Palestine in the First Century were only a fraction of the Jews then alive ; that until 70 A.D. Christianity spread mainly among Jews ; that it did not begin to spread among Gentiles until A.D.100 ; that enmity between Christians and Jews did not begin until well on in the Second Century.

It appears, indeed, that the chief difficulties in telling the story of the Crucifixion so as to promote love and understanding among men, lies not in the story itself but in our own hearts and minds. It is difficult for us to read the Testament with clear and candid eyes. For our vision is clouded by two thousand years of history and the very words we use are thick with the accretions of the past. We have indeed reason to be grateful to scholars like James Parkes and Jules Isaac who help us once again to approach in a fresh new light, a story we all know so well and yet so badly.

## Building Today for Tomorrow

GERTRUDE HART DAY

*A digest of Mrs. Gertrude Hart Day's description of the New Haven (Connecticut) Neighbourhood Project—an experiment in the practice of democracy.*

NEIGHBOURHOOD planning as a rule, has this humble beginning—  
One neighbour going to see another. The home-makers of this story of neighbourhood planning are families of mainly middle class Americans—but they are the people of the world. They are brown and yellow and white. They are of the three religious groups : Roman Catholic, Jewish and Protestant, rich in cultural backgrounds from many nations.

There were two of us in the beginning—white, Protestant Americans with our family roots in Connecticut for many generations. Each of us believed that shared experiences around a common need are the best means of educating our children and ourselves to an understanding of one another. One day we determined to find out if there were others among our friends who believed as we did. For several weeks we talked “neighbourhood planning”, sometimes around the tea table or at various neighbourhood gatherings. The ideals of two began to kindle the imagination of others until a tiny corps of volunteer leaders came into being.

For three months this little group studied the neighbourhood. We interviewed clergy and school principals. We talked with neighbourhood people. One evening as I sat in the drug store on a busy corner I talked with the druggist. Native-born of foreign parents, he knows what it means to live and to work in a free country where a man can own his business, regardless of his nationality background. “But,” he says, “it’s too bad the others on the street don’t get together and have a playground for the kids. It’s not safe here through the summer. Use my store any time you like for posters and things.”

Isadore Stein owns a delicatessen store. He says most of the brotherhood he knows is talk. He thinks a playground for summer would be a swell idea, and he gives five dollars to pay for the posters.

Father O’Flaherty is a much loved and respected pastor, wise and cautious. He believes the task to bring understanding will be long and hard, but he wishes me well and writes a letter in which he urges the people of his parish to join in the neighbourhood plan.

The young rabbi of the Temple put it this way, “I have felt that ‘inter-faith’ must include more than rhetoric and yearly displays of goodwill. It must indeed be concretized into some constructive and tangible channels.”

It was finally possible to call together a larger group and to present them with the challenge of working together for the good of all. The first

project had to be relatively easy of accomplishment—something that could be brought rather quickly into being so that we might gain encouragement through acknowledged success. It was finally decided to pool our efforts towards a summer playground.

Three months later, the playground opened. Since then it has functioned successfully each summer, serving a vital neighbourhood need. But the playground itself was not the most exciting result of our efforts. Rather, it was the change that took place in the attitudes and relationships of those of us who attended committee meetings, arranged discussion groups around the tea table and worked side by side in the survey. We began to know something of one another's backgrounds. Something had happened; a real sense of comradeship stirred in us.

Not only were attitudes changed, but neighbourhood needs were explored in these formal meetings. A Sunday School teacher suggested that we set up a Training Institute where others like herself might gain greater insight into practical ways of supplementing religious instruction with intergroup projects for children's participation. Her enthusiasm culminated a few weeks later in an Institute that brought together Sunday School teachers from several Negro and white Protestant churches. Teachers gained much, not only in the guidance and suggestions but also in getting to know one another through discussion and the planning of joint projects.

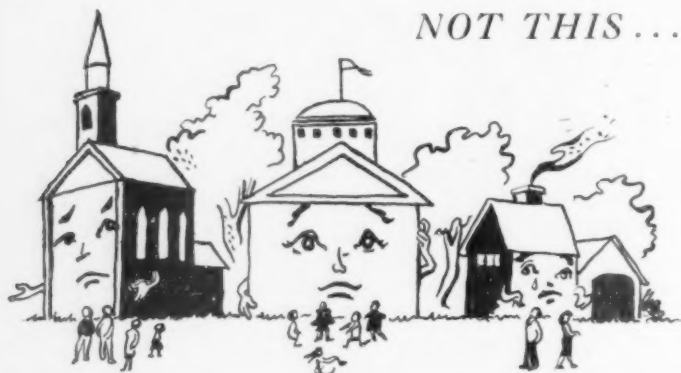
One of the local Parent-Teachers' Association was stimulated to plan a Study Group for mothers which went far toward creating a sense of "universal parenthood" as mothers met in one another's homes and discussed the common problems and responsibilities they shared, not as Christians and Jews, but as mothers in one world.

### **What Next ?**

In the weeks that followed the accomplishment of the Playground Project, as other short-term programmes took shape and neighbourhood participants increased in number, we considered whether we should regard our programme as completed, or continue and accept the more serious challenge of a project that would require sustained activities over a long period of time.

One afternoon a neighbourhood parent, formerly a nursery school teacher, asked "Do you suppose our next step could centre around a nursery school? There is such need for one in this neighbourhood." Here was no easy short-term project but one that could mean much, once achieved!

Four months after planning began, our Neighbourhood Nursery School opened its doors to eight children. Children and trained teachers were selected as nearly as possible to be representative of the religious and cultural backgrounds of the neighbourhood. In the second year there were twenty-six children. The approved nursery school programme is followed in the school with the educational value resting upon the experience the children share in living, playing and working together under expert direction. The school stresses child and parent co-education. Parents are urged to visit the school as often as possible, and there is an active parent programme subdivided into working committees.



An outgrowth of the Nursery School is the Neighbourhood Summer Playschool for children from five to twelve years of age.

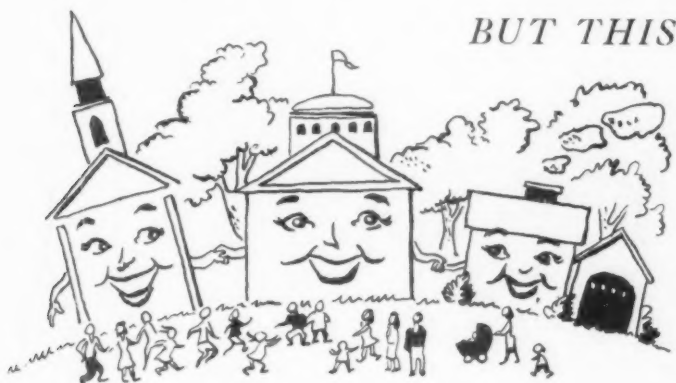
The Playground ! The Nursery School ! The Summer Playschool ! These neighbourhood-selected activities made it obvious that one of the greatest stimuli of all members of a neighbourhood, no matter what their creed, race or culture, is their children. We had found an indestructible core around which to relate many short-term projects based on natural interests.

### **Leadership**

An encouraging factor in our neighbourhood-centred activity was our growing awareness of people, sometimes entirely unrelated to our projects and sometimes because of their experience with us, who were using their individual initiative and sense of leadership to stimulate other

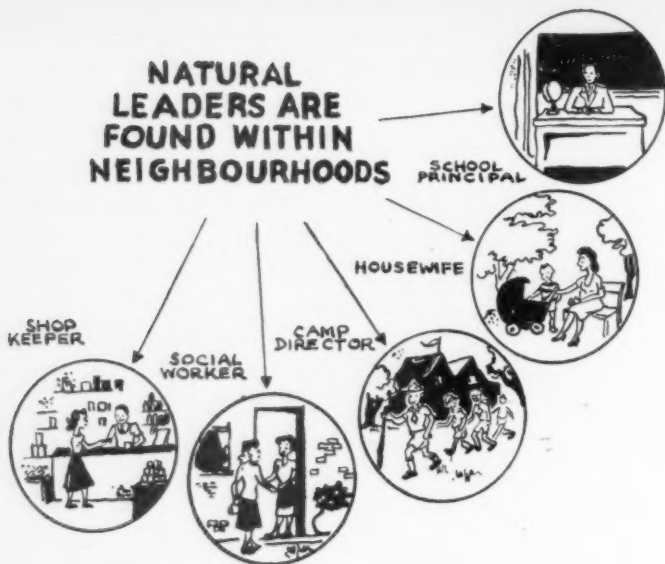
areas to neighbourhood planning. Could these courageous citizens be the nucleus of a Neighbourhood Council, a group to advise, suggest and criticise neighbourhood planning efforts and to exchange experiences one with another ?

The natural leaders are the strong pivots for neighbourhood projects. They are not " joiners " who dip into any new venture and rarely follow through when the going gets rough. They are not necessarily persons who have already achieved prestige or stature because of previously recognised accomplishments. They are working constantly in their homes, on the job,



and in their social contacts to activate their ideals. They have these four basic qualifications for natural leadership : (i) Loyalty to an idea ; (ii) Determination to stick with an activity in spite of difficulty ; (iii) Ability to compromise without sacrificing self-integrity ; (iv) Love of people.

These are the kind of people who serve on our first Neighbourhood Council. They are not many in number but they are representative of the various group backgrounds of the neighbourhood. They meet on call. Various specific situations have been worked on through meetings of a few small committees composed of Council members. We lean upon deeply motivated individuals to lead the way and to spark the job to be done. We encourage one friend to approach another and we never urge individuals to work on a project that does not hold their interest or challenge their personal abilities. We work, play, and plan together



toward the common good of our neighbourhood and our community with a sense of mission, but our emphasis is upon an informal natural fellowship.

We believe projects are successful because the people who work at them and share in them have come to a basic agreement as to the spiritual interpretation of democracy and its practical application. They have agreed to three principles—loyalty, each one to his own way of worship ; respect, each for the other, regardless of their differences ; and co-operation in areas of common civic concern.

They believe that they must practice these ideals—put them to work in every day living relationships and, examining themselves and their prejudices honestly, they recognise that learning experiences in democracy must begin with pre-school age level and extend through all phases of family living.

We do not claim that ours is the only or the best way, but we hope that the plan we have found helpful will stimulate other pioneers to “grass roots” planning of their own design.

## A Common Heritage

PERCY INESON

*Percy Ineson reminds readers of Common Ground that the solution of the problem of 13,000,000 homeless people must be a common task.*

IT is difficult within a limited space and in simple language to depict what is a major heritage of the war and a continuing menace to the peace of the world. It is a heritage from which we cannot escape, and which only a common acceptance and endeavour can transform—the tale of human misery which we call the refugee and displaced person problem, but which is essentially that of the *uprooted person*. It is a ghastly record of destitution, of disruption of family life, of loss of civil status and decline of moral and physical standards, and complete uncertainty as to the future place and pattern of life.

The problem is so large and variable as to defy definition, for this week's flights alter last week's facts.

In 1945 there were roughly nine million Displaced Persons in Europe. These were in the main the victims of the Nazi policy of forced labour, and in the intervening years almost eight millions of them have been either repatriated or resettled. There are still therefore a million of these original uprooted ones who for various reasons are either unwilling or unable to return home. They are being cared for and as far as possible resettled by the International Refugee Organisation.

If this were the whole story we might feel that the problem was within sight of being solved. Unhappily, however, whilst the humanitarian agencies of the victorious powers have been solving one problem, the political actions of the same powers have been negating the results.

The Potsdam Agreement provided for the expulsion of some three million Sudetendeutsche from Czechoslovakia, some four million Reichsdeutsche from the areas of East Prussia ceded to Poland. Other expulsions from other countries followed, and to-day from Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia and, more recently the Soviet zone of Germany, there is a constant infiltration of frightened people.

### Thirteen Million Homeless People

The numerical result of all this is that despite the reduction of the nine million mentioned above, there are at least thirteen million uprooted and homeless people in Europe to-day. Of these, eleven million are of German ethnic origin and for that reason are excluded from United Nations care. The refugee problem in Europe is larger to-day than it was at the end of the war.

These people have lost their homes and holdings and stock, their life savings, often their pension and insurance rights, and even the tools and implements of their crafts. They arrived in Germany with no furniture, little clothing, less money and no material means of earning a living. Whilst the vast majority of them are peasant people, there are also many thousands of professional men whose careers seem to be at an end. Many doctors, lawyers and dentists have lost the right to practise without re-examination, many students have lost the hope of qualifying.

The location of these uprooted peoples is to a lesser degree in Italy, and Austria, though in Austria the proportion of refugees in relation to the native population is one in ten. The crux of the problem, however, is clearly situated in Germany, where over ten millions of homeless and largely hopeless people are seeking to exist, creating difficulties which they cannot possibly overcome by themselves, for the German people who are trying to reconstruct their life. In other words, as we suggested at an earlier stage, the common heritage of tragedy can only be met by the united efforts of the nations recognising our common humanity and dependence on each other.

### **Concrete Proposals**

In the face of this appalling picture the World Council of Churches has recently called together a representative International Conference in Hamburg to find out the real facts, and to suggest lines of action for the solution of the wide-spread problems. The Conference was convinced of the wide international nature and implications of the German refugee situation, and the growing uneasiness of world opinion at the continued failure to remedy it. Despite this, however, it was confident that there are real and practicable possibilities of a constructive solution, provided that a concerted German self-help effort at rehabilitation is assisted by an adequate foreign aid programme. Various proposals were examined and passed on to the Refugee Division of the World Council to study and amplify with a view to action. They included the development of industry in Germany, especially in helping to erect buildings to house homeless Germans as well as refugees. They included also the development of a policy of settlement of refugees on fully supporting farms, and of group settlement, and a more fully developed scheme for emigration and re-distribution. Special stress was laid on the importance of the family group so that in any large scale, as well as small scale, migration the family unit should be preserved, and the aged and infirm incorporated in such groups. The churches and parishes both in Germany and the

countries of reception were urged to regard it as their special concern to supervise the emigration and arrangement for the reception of immigrants. Then the question of vocational training and retraining as a means of incorporating the refugees in the vocational structures of the German economy was considered, especially in relation to the children and young people. This is far from being a complete picture, but it indicates both the size and the urgency of the problem, and the seriousness with which a group of people outside of Government circles is facing the task. Let the fact that some people are facing things should make us relax and say all is well, let us remind ourselves that this is a *common task*, and close with a picture which is not exceptional.

### A Picture of things as they are

A recent extended tour of Schleswig-Holstein, the worst crowded of all provinces, revealed that the problem is not merely a matter of maldistribution of population with some consequent economic unbalance. It is rather a situation whose consequences are poisoning the very roots of family life, and of municipal and provincial activities. Compulsory billeting is widespread, and overcrowding is almost universal and to a degree which is an offence to even the lowest social, moral and sanitary standards. One family to one bedroom is almost normal and nine adults to five single beds in one room may have been an extreme but was not an isolated case. Proud homes have been turned into common lodging houses and proud housewives share their kitchens and their household treasures with three or four strangers. In circumstances such as these integration is impossible, and deep social irritation is inevitable. A note from a responsible citizen of Flensburg, where there are 41,000 refugees in a total population of 103,000, after referring to the more obvious consequences of overcrowding, continues: "The most important thing, however, is the progressive deterioration of character which follows from the atmosphere of constant hostility in which these two contrary groups are forced to live together. Both groups have given up any attempt to tolerate and understand each other and they live side by side in mutual suspicion and dislike. One further reason for this is to be found in the existence of fundamental differences between the two elements—differences which are evident in their appearance and their physiognomy, their idiom of speech and their general behaviour."

This is your heritage and mine. Let us face it and solve it together and in common effort find our own common group expanding until there is no ground that is not common.

## Brotherhood Week

WILLARD JOHNSON

*Improving Community Relations in America.*

**B**ROTHERHOOD Week has become a national institution in the United States ; it is as much a part of America as hamburgers and apple pie. February 20—27, 1949, was the sixteenth annual observance. President Harry S. Truman was Honorary Chairman and Nelson A. Rockefeller served most effectively as General Chairman. Reports coming into the offices of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, sponsors of the programme, indicate that Brotherhood Week was celebrated in virtually every community in the United States.

The theme of the Week was BROTHERHOOD MUST BE LIVED and major emphasis was placed on the elimination of discrimination and injustice by the learning and practice of brotherhood. Many communities conducted studies about their unfair attitudes and practices together with the good attitudes and resources available to overcome the prejudice ; these were called *Community Audits* or *Community Self-Surveys*. The resulting "community balance sheets," listing the liabilities and assets, were then presented to the various Brotherhood Week committees so that the observance might be related to the actual practices in the community.

### Who observed Brotherhood Week ?

Both national and local committees functioned in the following groups and organisations : schools and colleges, churches and synagogues, community groups, radio, newspapers, magazines, motion pictures and advertising. Prominent national leaders were chairmen and members of the national committees, and equally prominent leaders from cities and villages served on the community committees. American leaders incidentally are convinced that one of the most effective methods of building good will is this working together in committees of people of various religious groups. All the committees, which totalled many thousands of members, consisted of Protestants, Catholics and Jews.

Awards were made to several radio and television networks, stations and programmes, for contributions to respect and understanding among the American people. Such awards have been made annually for the past six years. One of the most important of these awards was to the Armed Forces Radio Services for a programme in the relationship series, heard by millions of people throughout the world, entitled *Miracle in Brooklyn*. The citation was received personally by Secretary of Defence, James Forrestal, in a ceremony in Washington attended by many high ranking officers of Army, Navy and Air Force.



*Children of different religions and races attend Brotherhood Week programme at Dwight School, Hartford, U.S.A.*

### **Radio and Press Co-operate**

A new Brotherhood Week award was instituted this year which will be repeated in future years. It is national recognition to the community which has done the most to promote better human relations during the past year. The 1949 award was given to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. A half-hour radio documentary programme on the Columbia Broadcasting System described the good work done by the Twin Cities, and Mr. Rockefeller made the presentation for NCCJ.

Most of the nation's 17,000 motion picture theatres co-operated this year by showing special short features in the seven national regular newsreels and by collecting funds for the National Conference. Many of the theatres arranged other special programmes and brotherhood displays in their lobbies.

### BROTHERHOOD WEEK

FEBRUARY 20-27, 1949



Outstanding work was done by national magazines and newspapers, large and small. Many leading magazines ran full length stories and articles on brotherhood. NCCJ offices are flooded with clippings of articles, pictures and news accounts.

President Truman, Nelson Rockefeller and Dr. Everett R. Clinchy took part in a ceremony at the White House opening the nation-wide observance.

Popular acceptance of the observance was characterised by the emphasis that Brotherhood Week is the annual occasion for re-dedication of the American people to the religious and democratic ideals of respect for all people, and for beginning or expanding year-round programmes for education in good relationships among Protestants, Catholics and Jews.

#### Preparations for Brotherhood Week

It is impossible to estimate the number of communities which arranged special programmes. Materials to give assistance to these programmes were distributed throughout the nation through national educational,

religious and civic organisation magazines and mailing lists. The 64 offices of the National Conference were swamped with requests for speakers, motion pictures and other programme materials. Reports received at national headquarters of NCCJ indicate that there were programmes of importance in small towns and villages in every state and some observers believe that there is no other programme in the American calendar which receives such widespread and comprehensive attention.

Perhaps the most pertinent comment was made by Mr. Bernhard Mueller, chairman of the Stuttgart (Germany) Council of Christians and Jews who arrived in the United States just before Brotherhood Week. He decided to test the reception of the American people to the idea ; so he went up and down the streets of New York City, into stores and cafés, asking every person he met what they knew about Brotherhood Week and the NCCJ. He failed to find a single person who did not know something about the observance and the sponsoring organisation, the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Without question, Brotherhood Week has become an American institution.

## Jésus et Israël

JULES ISAAC

Examined by Dr. James W. Parkes.

THIS is not only a very important book\* ; it is also a deeply moving book to read. Its style, with its restrained passion and moments of bitter irony, is brilliant, and the eloquence of a master of the most delicate and expressive language of Europe lends added depth and force to a book which would in any case be memorable. Born out of intense personal suffering and the agony of national disaster, it is the record of a fresh examination of the story unfolded in the Gospels of the relations of Jesus with His people, a record much of which was written in hiding, when books were difficult of access and any day might bring fresh disaster.

In twenty-one propositions, M. Isaac examines the traditional Christian thesis, both Catholic and Protestant, that Jesus rejected and was rejected by His people, who corporately and consciously put Him to death rather than accept His claims to be the Messiah. The extent to which this is the traditional thesis he shows in quotation after quotation from the best known and most reputable French Christian scholars.

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\**Jésus et Israël*. Jules Isaac, Paris, Editions Albin Michel, 1948.

Certain modern schools of criticism could justifiably claim to be exempt from his condemnation. He would find much to support his view in the work of scholars like Manson or Branscombe ; and the attitude which they represent is increasingly passing into school text books and religious syllabi in England. But these changes have done no more than scratch the surface of the main Christian tradition, as exemplified by both Catholics and Protestants here and on the continent. It is a pity that the book, as it stands, is untranslatable ; for the Christian authorities, quotations from whom are an outstanding point of the volume, are naturally those familiar to French Christians, but wholly unfamiliar to English readers.

### **The Contents of the Book**

The first six propositions deal with the thesis that Jesus, the Messiah, was a Jew 'after the flesh,' and contain little with which even a conservative scholar would disagree. Then follow four propositions on *the Gospel in the Synagogue*, in which the burning question of the relations of Jesus with the Judaism of His day is examined, on the basis of the actual evidence of the Gospels themselves. The author shows how ill-founded is the conventional characterisation of Judaism as wholly arid and legalistic, how little evidence there is for the theory that at the time of Jesus it was in a state of decline, and he deals at length with the traditional thesis that in Jesus the Law, and the régime of the Law, are brought to an end. Then follow five propositions on *Jesus and His People*, dealing with the claim that 'the Jews' rejected Him. M. Isaac reminds the reader that the dispersion had already taken place, that only a minority of Jews lived in Palestine, and that only a minority of these would probably ever have met, or possibly even heard of, Jesus. The importance of this section lies in its reminder that, when we are dealing with the lifetime of Christ itself, we must take care not to refer back an attitude which, in fact, is only provable from the beginning of the second century, and has many other roots than rejection of the actual teaching or person of Jesus.

Certain scholars, and both Catholics and Protestants are fully quoted, have balanced the supposed rejection of Jesus by the Jews with the statement that Jesus, in founding the Church, likewise rejected His people. Here again M. Isaac shows how later history has been read back into, and perverted, the Gospel story. He is at pains to contrast the synoptic and Johannine picture ; and gives really horrifying quotations to show the attempts made, particularly from the Catholic side, to pretend that there is no contradiction between them.

The final section deals with the Accusation of Deicide, and reminds the reader how much Jewish blood has been shed through how many centuries on the basis of this charge. Even when Christians are trying to present the story of the arrest, trial and crucifixion accurately and scrupulously, it is painfully easy for them to slip into saying 'the Jews' when they mean the high priests, the Jerusalem crowd, or even the Romans; and in fact it is only when the propositions put forward in the first sections are fully recognised and become part and parcel of the normal teaching of the Church that one could really claim that the teaching of the last week was not capable of creating anti-Jewish feelings in the hearers. Certainly the evidence of many Jewish parents, even in England, is that the prejudice *is* created, though they themselves would often be the first to admit that it was probably unintentional.

Even those whose withers would be unwrung by the direct charges which are made against the traditional Christian teaching could still read the book with profit. It is not enough to be intellectually convinced of a particular hypothesis about the New Testament. It would be good if more Christians had the passionate fire of conviction which burns in every page of this book; so that even if a chance word were misapplied, it would matter no more than if one had said Ezra when one meant Nehemiah in some account of Jewish history. We are far from that yet.

## Commentary

### ● Man's Inhumanity . . .

Just ten years ago many people in Great Britain were deeply concerned about the plight of some tens of thousands of refugees from Nazi tyranny (most of them Jews) who found their way to this country. Fortunately for them and for the refugees it was possible for their concern to find expression in all kinds of practical service.

To-day, confronted with refugee problems on a far more serious scale, there is a great danger lest the concern which many still feel at the plight of the now millions of victims of man's inhumanity to man, should simply run to seed or seek relief in mere arguments about responsibility. It is too temptingly easy to blame this or that group instead of acknowledging, as Victor Gollancz pointed out in a recent letter to the *Times*, that the responsibility lies "with the wickedness in all of us and the history in which we are involved."

What is desperately needed is action. Action in Germany, where many of the 12,000,000 victims, not of Nazi oppression but of allied negotiations, have already begun to believe that the only hope of any change in their condition lies in the outbreak of another war. Action in Palestine, where in spite of the efforts of the United Nations and the International Red Cross the plight of more than 3/4 million Arab refugees, not so much from actual persecution as from the fears engendered by political propaganda, remains still very serious. Action is needed too in certain of the Arab countries, where, since the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine in May last year, Jewish minorities are being subjected to all kinds of discrimination and "cold persecution."

It may be that in the long run only action by governmental or inter-governmental organisations will prove adequate to deal with these problems—but the stimulus of voluntary effort, and the constant challenge of informed public opinion is still needed to ensure that such action is taken speedily and effectively. It is of the utmost importance that such stimulus should be constantly forthcoming, both for the sake of the refugees and of ourselves also, for the frustrations and resentments to which this whole problem gives rise, may well prove to be a much more serious factor in making for war, than any knowledge we may have about atomic energy or the possibilities of bacteriological warfare.

### ● "Intolerance"

In 1917 the pioneer American film producer D. W. Griffith made what was for those days an outstanding film called "Intolerance." It was recently revived for a seven-week season at the Everyman Cinema, Hampstead.

Both from the technical point of view and because of its theme, the film is interesting—although it takes some time to get used to the rapid sequence of short scenes from four different stories of intolerance, each set in a different period of history, from the sixth century B.C. to the twentieth century A.D.

Three of the instances are of religious intolerance, and the persecution and strife to which they lead are vividly portrayed. The fourth story—the modern setting with which the film begins and ends—is of the social and industrial intolerance of the United States of America in the early decades of the present century. There seems no reason, other than the theory that the hero must in the end triumph, why this story alone of the four should have a "happy ever after" ending.

The film is now in the Central Film Library. It is to be hoped that it will be shown again in other parts of London, and in the provinces too.

## About Ourselves

### A Successful Meeting

On the evening of Sunday, March 27th, the largest hall in the University College, Hull, was filled to capacity for the first public meeting arranged by the Hull Council of Christians and Jews. The Lord Mayor presided over the meeting, and the Chief Rabbi gave an inspiring address. The Bishop of Hull, and Father J. L. Hall (Roman Catholic), gave warm support to the Council of Christians and Jews, as did the Moderator of the Hull Free Church Federal Council and other speakers.

The meeting unanimously adopted a resolution urging all members of the Christian and Jewish communities in Hull to give the Council their support in an active programme to foster goodwill and co-operation among different community groups in the City.

### Summer Conference

A Summer School or conference is becoming an accepted part of the Council's programme, and this year we have reserved accommodation at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, from Monday, September 12th, to Friday, September 16th.

The Conference will be primarily concerned with furthering the work of the Council through our local branches and we hope that as many members as possible from the provinces will attend. But we should like to see also a good representation of our London members and associates.

The inclusive accommodation charge will be £3 10s. 0d. for the full period. Bookings should be sent in as soon as possible.

An enrolment form is printed on page 31 of this magazine.

### Hampstead Development

For some months a group of enthusiasts have been preparing the way for the establishment of a branch of the Council of Christians and Jews

in West Hampstead. Now they have been successful, and a local committee has been established with the full support of clergy and laity of all denominations.

Its first act has been to send a letter to the local newspapers and to all branches of other organisations in the borough.

Supporting the Council's letter in a full-length editorial, the "Hampstead News" writes: "We feel there is scarcely a more worthwhile service which any citizen could render to the neighbourhood and to the ideal of tolerance and mutual understanding than to share in the work of this group. The conflict of outlook, ideas, temperaments, and—as some would contend—interests, between Christian and Jew is more clearly perceived perhaps in a mixed area such as that served by this newspaper than in many other districts, but the local manifestation is but a microcosm of the larger life of the world.

"This conflict must be resolved if the brave new world of our dreams is to become a reality. It is, in fact, a priority task for any people professing the democratic ideal, but the man-in-the street sees little opportunity of doing anything practical about it. Here in Hampstead, however, is an obvious opening for those who wish to further the cause of brotherhood.

"Do not let us delude ourselves into thinking the Council's task will be easy, but let us assure ourselves that it is well worth while. We trust that there will be a widespread response to the Council's invitation, both by individuals and organisations, and that West Hampstead's excellent example will be widely followed."

The local committee is now busy enrolling new members, and is preparing an ambitious programme of meetings, lectures, and inter-change visits between Christian and Jewish groups.

## Book Notes

### Visual History of Mankind

*Books I, II. Notebook for Teachers.*  
(Ed. Lancelot Hogben. Harrap).

Professor J. A. Lauwerys, Professor of Comparative Education in London University, and Educational Adviser to the International Council of Christians and Jews, has recently been conspiring with Otto and Marie Neurath, Directors of the Isotype Institute, in an attempt to make the teaching of history more interesting, at least in the primary school.

Inspired by the Scottish Report on Primary Education (1946) which says of visual education that "it depends not so much on direct photography as on the animated cartoon," these three collaborators working under the honorary editorship of Lancelot Hogben, set out to translate the principles of the animated cartoon into the idiom of the printed book. This they have done by the use of a picture language, *Isotype*, in which certain symbols occur over and over again, in colours and patterns which themselves suggest meanings and are not intended to be purely decorative.

Three books have so far been produced—two for the children, and a third for the teacher. A fourth is on the way to complete the series which deals with the general theme of man's adventures in living, first in very early times, secondly in towns and villages, and finally in a world made one by improving techniques and the general speeding up of communications. If they can be said to have a "leit-motif" it is that "all too slowly and painfully, mankind is learning the lesson that secure and fruitful advance comes not through the enslavement of human beings but from the co-operative exploitation of natural resources."

On the success of the experiment it must be for the teachers, and perhaps especially those children who are fortunate enough to use these books, to judge. For our part, we would simply register the hope that the books will be as widely used as their attractive qualities lead us to believe that they should be. If this experiment succeeds the Isotype method might well be used in other educational fields, and not least in our own attempts to promote better human relationships.

### DO YOU READ—

#### YOUR DENOMINATIONAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPER ?

BAPTIST TIMES	ENGLISH CHURCHMAN
BRITISH WEEKLY	THE FRIEND
CATHOLIC HERALD	GUARDIAN
CATHOLIC TIMES	JEWISH CHRONICLE
CHRISTIAN HERALD	JEWISH WEEKLY
CHRISTIAN WORLD	METHODIST RECORDER
CHURCH OF ENGLAND NEWSPAPER	SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRONICLE
CHURCH TIMES	TABLET

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**Members of the Weekly Religious Press Group**

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**Dr. S. M. Lehrman** is Rabbi of New Synagogue, Stamford Hill. He was Inspector of Jewish Religious Education for Great Britain (1941-45), and beside writing several books, collaborated in the Soncino Talmud and the Jewish Encyclopædia.

**Rev. Isaac Livingstone** is Rabbi of Golders Green Synagogue. He is the Jewish representative on the Churches Group of the National Council of Social Service, and a member of various Anglo-Jewish organisations.

**Rev. Dr. J. W. Parkes** was Study Sec. International Student Service, Geneva, 1928-32. He is the author of a number of books on Judaism and Christianity, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Christians and Jews.

**The Bishop of Stepney** (RT. REV. ROBERT MOBERLY) is a member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Christians and Jews.

*ERRATA—We regret that in our last issue, we did not correctly describe Mr. S. Salomon. The Secretary of the Jewish Defence Committee is Mr. Roston. Mr. Salomon is Executive Officer of the Committee and Press Officer of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.*

### THE SUMMER SCHOOL OF THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

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Please enrol me for the Summer School.

NAME (block letters please) .....

ADDRESS .....

## ATTITUDES TO MINORITY GROUPS

*A report prepared by a Committee of Psychologists  
and Sociologists, under the Chairmanship of the late  
Dr. C. S. Myers.*

This inquiry into the psychological and sociological causes of hostility towards minority groups and some of the means by which these attitudes may be modified or eradicated was prepared at the request of the Council of Christians and Jews

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